



COLORADO CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

"Representing the interests of Colorado's beef industry since 1867"

Senator Michael Bennet
US Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Bennet;

Colorado Cattlemen's Association supports authorization language in the Farm Bill for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), of which Colorado State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories is a core member. The NAHLN consists of 50 state-funded animal disease diagnostic laboratories throughout the USA; partnering with the USDA/APHIS/VS and USDA-NIFA to form a state/federal surveillance and emergency response system providing the backbone of nation-wide food security.

The NAHLN is our nation's most vital early warning system guarding against emerging and foreign animal diseases and guarding against economic devastation of animal agriculture in the U.S.A. The NAHLN has the capability to test for economically-devastating diseases such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), avian and swine influenza, classical swine fever, and others. NAHLN laboratories serve as the first line of defense and surveillance for the network, through the daily samples they receive from livestock across the country. At the same time, they provide a cadre of trained, proficiency-tested personnel to meet the testing needs required in the event of an introduction of an economically-important livestock disease or disease causing a public health threat. The USDA Economic Research Service reported that the 2012-marketed value of listed agricultural commodities exceeded \$100 billion. The 2010 USDA Economic Research Service estimated the value of the US beef industry at \$74B with \$3.8B in exports; and the U.S. poultry broiler industry at \$45B, with \$3.1B in exports. Without the NAHLN, and the early disease detection it provides, an outbreak of FMD could cost the U.S. agriculture industry an estimated \$128 billion. This possibility includes decreased revenues for corn and soybeans of \$44B and \$24.9B, respectively. This loss translates into roughly 154,000 jobs over the course of an outbreak.

So as you can see, the National Animal Health Laboratory Network is very important to the U.S. livestock industry and the over 12,000 ranchers in Colorado. Thus, the Colorado Cattlemen's Association would encourage you to support authorization language for NAHLN in the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

T. Wright Dickinson
President